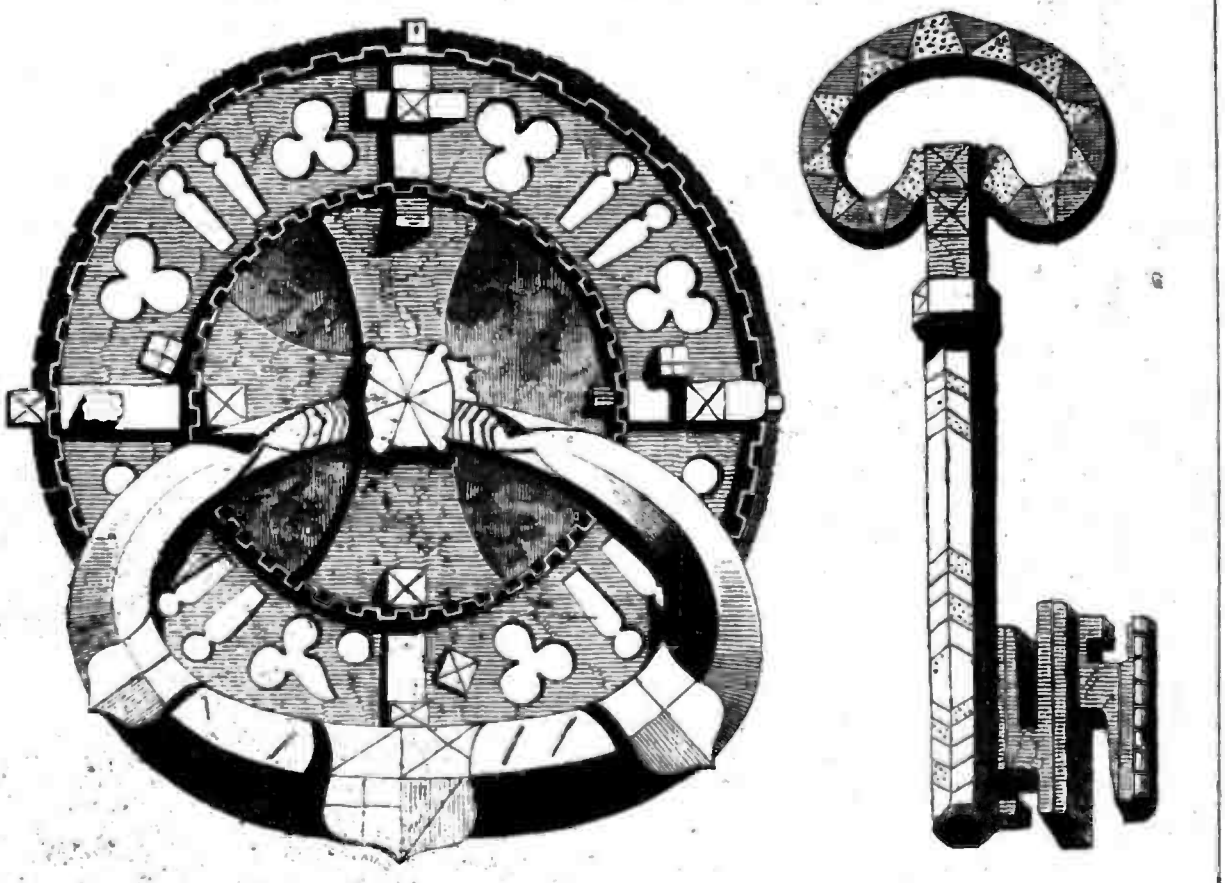
ANCIENT IRON WORK FROM DICKLEBURGH CHURCH.



ANCIENT IRON-WORK FROM DICKLEBURGH CHURCH, NORFOLK.

SIR,—The accompanying sketches represent of full size, the handle and key belonging to the vestry-door of the church of Dickleburgh, in Norfolk. The style of architecture throughout the whole church is perpendicular, and the door on which the handle is fixed is small, with a four-cebtred arch, in the north wall of the chancel, opposite the priest's door. They are very fair specimens of the art of the smith in those days, displaying an amount of decoration not often found on the iron-work of the doors of country churches. In former numbers of your journal the subject of "ancient iron-work" has been ably treated, and the inferiority of modern work, in point of ornament, clearly shewn. The introduction of cast-iron, doubtless, is the main cause of this decay of art; and, therefore, it is not the operative that is to be blamed for his inability to execute that kind of work which is seldom or never called for. In viewing our ancient churches and other Gothic edifices, we feel irresistibly impressed with the belief, that a very different feeling prevailed in the architectoral and building world than exists in modern times; the same feeling of regard for the sacred pile they were erecting; the same careful wish to render work substantial and lasting; the same love of adorning even the most minute and unimportant parts of the structure, pervaded every man engaged, from the architect down to the humblest mechanic, and amongst these the blacksmith was not behind in upholding the character of his craft. Looking at our present specimens, the key in particular, is very elaborately constructed, and there are, perhaps, very few modern workmen who could not make them *more neatly*; but it is the *patient attention to minute ornament* which they would lack. Edifices must now be reared for a certain sum of money and within a certain time. Massive strength or elaborate ornament can seldom be paid for, and thus all inducement being removed, the spirit is gone which actuated the blacksmith to adorn even a bolt or a latch, and the woodcarver to imprint on the oaken panel those grotesque and beautiful representations, many of which doubtless sprung up in *his own mind* as he proceeded with his work.

The disuse of decorative wrought-iron seems to have been gradual; and we find some ornamental specimens (such as casement fastenings, hinges, &c.) of a much later date than those above alluded to. The bolt and hinges to the door of a pew (in the nave of the same church, on the joinery of which is cut the date 2822) are more in keeping with the building than the wretched 'H joints' and 'flat bolts' we often now see used.

Dickleburgh. † †

*** We have in preparation engravings at large, of some beautifully worked ancient locks.

NORWICH: ENTRANCE GATEHOUSES TO THE PALACE AND CATHEDRAL PRECINCTS.

THE city of Norwich presents many architectural objects and features of a singular, picturesque, and interesting nature. Its fine Anglo-Norman castle, with vast foss, ramparts, and vallia; the fortified walls with numerous bastion towers, and entrance gatehouses, with machicolated and embattled gatehouses, are so many evidences of the former military character of the place, as well as of the fearful and precarious state of the inhabitants, whose healths and homes were subject to the marauding and murdering invasions of foreign and domestic foes. The bishop's palace within the city, was still farther guarded and defended by lofty embattled walls, and only approached through large and formidable gatehouses, which could be guarded and barricaded at every approach of an enemy. Such objects, as well as the historical annals of the city, shew the lamentable condition in which its denizens were often placed. In Britton's "History, &c., of Norwich Cathedral" are recorded many instances of invasions and conflicts, in which the citizens were engaged, not merely in resisting foreign aggression, but in outbreaks and contests with each other, and particularly between the laity and the clergy. Hence, we account for the strength and height of the walls which inclosed the palace and cathedral buildings, and hence the origin and meaning of those large and formidable gatehouses, which were built in different parts of the walls. Three of these still remain to indicate, though not fully illustrate, the nature and peculiarities of those buildings. Two of them are shewn and described in the work already referred to; whilst one, called "the Eppingham Gate," is represented and noticed in the same author's "*Picturesque Antiquities of English Cities*." The *Palace*, or *Bishop's Gate-house*, partly represented in our last number, is also delineated in the same beautiful volume, from which we borrow the following account:—

"On the north side of the palace gardens is one of its entrances. It was raised by Bishop Alnwich about the year 1430, who either built the whole, or the greater part of the west front of the cathedral. As originally executed, this gatehouse must have been a fine specimen of architecture; but it has suffered much by neglect and by injudicious repairs. The arch, with its spandrils filled with tracery and blank shields, is a good specimen of design. The latter are said to have been inserted by Bishop Lyhart, who succeeded Alnwich. The spandrils of the principal archway are ornamented with rich tracery mouldings, inclosing blank shields, which were intended to bear the builder's arms, as that of Ly-hart (a hart or deer *couchant*), is carved in several shields on the small or lateral door. Over the arches is a very elaborate frieze of panelled compartments, inclosing shields which are alternately blank, and charged with the letter M. crowned; above this is a canopied niche, containing a seated statue crowned, implying a monarch. The angles of the building have square, flat buttresses, composed of stone quoins and flints. One of these buttresses is finished with a seated figure on a pinnacle. In the room over the gateway is a fire-place."